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*Douglas County is paving a path to an industrious future on a 150-acre parcel of land with a \$500,000 grant secured by U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, D-Wausau.*

By Shelly Nelson, Superior Telegram

Douglas County is paving a path to an industrious future on a 150-acre parcel of land with a \$500,000 grant secured by U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, D-Wausau.

County officials hired Krech and Ojard to conduct an engineering study of the parcel in Parkland annexed by the city – county-owned land once considered a site for a state prison. The study will give the county necessary information to create the Parkland Industrial Park.

Krech and Ojard have done wetland delineation and are working on a study of the environmental background of the site; the study could help identify potential industries for the site. Engineering work to identify infrastructure and utility needs for the site gets underway this winter.

“You have to be ready for business,” said Douglas County Board Chairman Doug Finn.

“We’re looking at a number of different options out there,” said Andy Lisak, Development Association director. The study underway will help determine those options.

Among the options is creating an eco-industrial park, one in which the byproducts of one industry becomes the source of material for another. When the county evaluated engineering firms for the project, knowledge of eco-industrial development was one of officials’ priorities.

“It’s the future ... and that’s where I think our vision should be,” said County Supervisor Bob Browne. “If we can be receptive to those kinds of companies, I think we will be a step ahead.”

However, Finn said fitting into an eco-industrial picture would not limit new development in the industrial park.

“We would encourage eco-industrial development, but I wouldn’t say it’s going to be exclusively for eco-industrial development,” Finn said. He said until the studies are complete, they won’t really know what potential lies ahead.

“We need to make sure that we’re good stewards of that land and that we develop it in an environmentally sensitive way,” Lisak said. “Outside of Parkland, the next largest tract of land within the city limits is the Winter Street Industrial Park. And they’re not making new land.”

Having land ready and available is the first step.

“It’s one of several tools that is very important when it comes to economic development, especially here,” Lisak said. “When you look at, within the city limits of Superior, the majority of our undeveloped land is classified as wetlands so we really don’t have large tracks of land that can be used for economic development ... it’s just not available to us in Superior. That’s why it’s so valuable.”

Lisak said the site offers access to U.S. Highway 53 and has potential to be served by rail – it’s adjacent to the Canadian National mainline between Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada and Chicago. It also has the potential to be designated a tax increment finance district because it was annexed by the city about a decade ago when local officials lobbied for a state prison.

“I think we have the best of all possible worlds; we have a piece of property that’s owned by Douglas County within the city limits” Lisak said.

So far, Finn said there have been no discussions with the city about creating the special taxing district because the engineering study isn’t complete.

“If there’s a business that is interested and would make sense, then we’d have to have discussions with the city,” Finn said.

“What we’re trying to do is gear this to having a shovel-ready industrial park when all is said and done,” Lisak said. “So we’d have everything in place, when we’ve identified a prospect and they’re ready to move forward.”

Original article is located [here](#) .